

Press Statement relating to Edouard Maurice Case

January 14, 2020

Find attached: Affidavit from Ryan Watson dated January 10, 2020

The Trespass Statutes (Protecting Law-Abiding Property Owners) Amendment Act (“**Bill 27**”) reflect the current Provincial Government’s efforts to tackle rural crime in Alberta, a growing concern for Alberta’s rural population. Bill 27 sets out a series of amendments to Provincial trespassing laws aimed at improving protections for law-abiding property owners. Subject to willful or reckless conduct a property owner is not liable for death or injury caused to a trespasser if they have reasonable grounds to believe a trespasser is committing, or about to commit, a criminal offence. Furthermore, if a trespasser wishes to sue a property owner for injury, damage, or death they must now prove that the property owner acted willfully and grossly disproportionate *and* that the property owner’s actions resulted in a conviction under *Criminal Code* (Canada).

As a result of this legislation Edouard Maurice, has brought an application to have the claim that is being brought against him by the convicted criminal Mr. Watson summarily dismissed. Mr. Maurice’s application was originally brought on December 18, 2019 however the Court granted Mr. Watson additional time to respond and set out certain procedural steps. In our view the law is clear and no further procedural steps are necessary. The claim should be immediately dismissed. As a result we are appealing the matter to the Court of Queen’s Bench to have the lawsuit immediately struck. This appeal application will be heard on January 16, 2020.

On January 10, 2020 Mr. Watson filed an affidavit in response to Mr. Maurice’s affidavit. The affidavit is self serving and contains damning admissions.

In order to get around the law, the convicted criminal Mr. Watson has now advised his lawyers to try and find new evidence to provide Crown Prosecutors in an attempt to have a criminal trial re-opened. He has further suggested that if that does not work, he is going to try to evoke the rarely used remedy of a “private prosecution” to try to have Mr. Maurice sent to prison. It appears that the sole purpose of him doing so is in order to circumvent Bill 27 so that he can continue his lawsuit. In other words a convicted criminal is going to try to have his victim, Mr. Maurice, sent to jail for the purpose of being able to continue to sue Mr. Maurice. He is doing this despite the fact that the RCMP conducted an investigation and the Crown determined that all charges against Mr. Maurice should be dropped.

Private prosecutions are governed by section 504 of the Criminal Code. Essentially, the convicted criminal Mr. Watson will need to bring an application before a judge to have a criminal case opened against Mr. Maurice. The fact that Mr. Watson is saying he plans on doing so almost 2 years after the incident is a clear violation of section 505 of the Criminal Code which calls for this unusual remedy to be asked for as soon as practical after the event. The additional fact that Mr. Watson has done nothing for two years and is only raising this possibility in response to legislation which would otherwise bar his claim is a clear indication that this is a clear cash grab. A convicted criminal trying to have an innocent citizen sent to prison simply so that the criminal can sue the innocent citizen is abhorrent.

Further, and shockingly, in his sworn affidavit Mr. Watson admits that he invaded Mr. Maurice’s property for the purpose of stealing from Mr. Maurice and his family.

The fact that a convicted crook is seeking to conduct a private investigation to try to have his victim sent to jail, despite already having gone through the due process for an RCMP investigation and Crown prosecution, is appalling and an affront to everything that this country stands for. The Maurices are now having to once again relive not only this incident, but also the trauma and fear related to the possibility of another criminal prosecution case against Edouard. It is clear that Watson will try anything to make money from the Maurices and we hope to see an immediate dismissal of this case by the Court, and no further action by the Crown or RCMP regarding the original criminal matter.